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ABSTRACT

This document explores the relationship between school boards and administrations, with the purpose of gaining insight about both the history and the future of public schools. First it discusses the history of their relationship up to the present time when the two bodies function as rough equals. Next it summarizes various models of board-superintendent relationships. Approaches that concentrate on the types of procedures employed, such as the harmony and pluralistic models, contrast with those that focus on particular loci of power, such as the administrative leadership model. Viewpoints that emphasize the environment in which school administration works--the systems model--contrast with those that focus on the actual institution involved, such as the harmony, pluralistic, and administrative leadership approaches. The final section of the paper discusses influences such as adaptation, trust, and respect that can aid in the development of continuity. The paper concludes that an analysis of these topics can produce important perspectives on the workings of public school governance as well as form the basis for more comprehensive research. (Author/LD)

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Board-Administration Relationships: A Key to Public School Governance

Prepared for the

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Annual Meeting

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Board-Administration Relationships: A Key to Public School Governance

The relationship between school boards and administrations lies at the very heart of the governance of American public education. It connects the embodiment of local control of schools, the citizen board, with the professionals who actually carry out the work of education. In it are summarized the pluralism, the decentralization, and the flexibility which make the United States approach to this process so unique. In it may also be contained many of the strengths and weaknesses of that system.[1]

For these reasons alone, any effort to understand the workings of American education must inevitably focus on this important relationship. Through an examination of its various aspects, insights concerning both the history and the future of the public schools might be gained.

The Historical Perspective

A look at the background of board-administration relationships produces information about the development of each of these two institutions and their continuing interaction. It reveals a multiplicity of types of relationships which have evolved to meet particular circumstances.

Neither the school board nor the school administration is a stranger to the national scene. Yet the former is by far the older of the two institutions.

The school board was originally a colonial phenomenon. It evolved from that epitome of democracy, the New England town meeting, as a permanent committee charged with school supervision. At first, the board existed as a creature of the town, accountable to municipal government. As the colonial population became dispersed, however, it became practical to separate the school committee from

institutions of central government. By the close of the eighteenth century, the school board had achieved legal recognition throughout Massachusetts. Many other areas would soon follow suit.[2]

While, by 1800, the local board of education had become a common feature on the American scene, that other component of the governance relationship, the school administration, had not yet appeared. Various reasons were largely responsible for this situation.

Because local education in the colonies was relatively unsophisticated, largely consisting of what are now grades 1-8, a complex mechanism of governance was not required. In this context, a citizen board, comprised of farmers who could allocate portions of their days to school supervision, served well. Beyond these factors, the political climate of colonial and revolutionary America was distinctly antiexecutive. The inhabitants of that world had not fought a long and exhausting war against a British executive in order to replace it with an American one, at any level! The government delineated by that first United States Constitution, the Articles of Confederation, made Congress supreme and left out an executive branch altogether. Education reflected this pattern. There seemed little reason to alter the status quo.[3]

When change finally did come, it arrived as a result of crisis. As the populations of many American cities rose dramatically during the first half of the nineteenth century, it became impossible for directly elected boards to execute policy on a continuing basis. At first, stopgap measures, such as the appointment of standing committees to deal with specific functions, were instituted. Yet the lack of continuity and permanence of these bodies often made them less effective than the structure they replaced. Eventually, a school executive became inevitable.

The first executives, or superintendents, were established in cities, where the burden of administration on citizen boards eventually became overwhelming. Buffalo and Louisville led the way, in 1837, creating the first American superintendencies of public education. St. Louis and Providence followed two years later. During the mid-nineteenth century, Philadelphia, New Orleans, Cleveland, and Baltimore also established educational officials. By 1890, almost every major American city school system would have one.[4]

The actual relationship between board and administration began to develop from the moment those first superintendencies were established. Yet because school superintendents were instituted in urban districts throughout the nineteenth century, the relationship in each area evolved independently. The fact that many rural districts delayed establishing them until the twentieth century extended this continuum still further.

One of the most fundamental elements of the relationship between school boards and administrations in the United States, the nature of administrative tenure, was formalized during the first years after the creation of those early superintendencies. Many of the first superintendents were, like their boards, elected by popular vote. Election fit the federal and state pattern, where presidents, governors and legislatures all emerged from the ballot box. In most city districts, however, the approach, proved short lived. Boards found that appointment made for greater coordination with their superintendents. The fact that most superintendencies had been created by the boards also made it fairly easy to change back to the appointment route. Still, election of superintendents has not completely disappeared. Many county and state officials still reach office through this mechanism.[5]

The relationships between school boards and the earliest superintendents evolved slowly during much of the nineteenth century. The early superintendent was literally a professional assistant to the board. One authority has concluded that "...there wasn't any question as to 'whose man' the superintendent was."[6] He came into being as an extension of the board, an aid in dealing with an increasingly complex environment.[7]

It is even unfair to characterize the early superintendents as sole executives within their districts. They were as much legislative aides as they were administrators. The typical board continued to exercise extensive executive authority through standing committees.

The closeness between board and superintendent in those earliest days was heightened by the fact that their respective tenures were often identical. Board members were usually reluctant to appoint superintendents for terms longer than their own. As a result, changes in governing bodies were often paralleled by turnovers of adminstration. The fact that board tenures were often brief, usually two years, meant that general continuity of direction was often lacking.[8]

Tasks were often divided between early boards and superintendents on a functional basis. Usually, financial, maintenance, and general management remained the concern of the board, while the superintendent supervised instruction. This arrangement was especially characteristic of urban school systems, where boards were dependent on finances controlled by city councils. In these situations, superintendents exercised authority over instruction and little else. In some cases, the "scholarly executive" was regarded as an individual concerned with academia who knew little about management as it is now defined.[9]

In most areas, the emergence of the superintendent as the chief executive officer and head of a separate branch of school administration was delayed until

the twentieth century. Only through a gradual process did the position grow from one concerned with menial chores and details, to one of leadership and responsibility.

In some districts, this change has still not been fully realized. Many boards still see their superintendents as chief clerks, tools for promulgation and execution of even the most minute decisions and policies.

There was no consistent pattern or program through which school board-superintendent relationships evolved, from its nineteenth century position to one resembling a partnership. Legislative direction has clearly not played a major role in the process. Only in about half of the states are the relationships between boards and superintendents defined in the laws. Even where such definition exists, the tie is delineated in the most general terms. The courts of 13 states have, for example, declared the superintendent to be an officer of the board, while those of 6 others have declared him to be an employee. Still others define the role as one of agency to the board.[10]

In the absence of clear and consisent legal direction, board superintendent relationships have developed during the twentieth century in response to local conditions. In most areas, rising numbers of students and the increasing complexity of problems confronting districts have forced boards to place greater reliance on the professional skill of the superintendent. The same situation has contributed to a delineation of respective spheres of activity. With few exceptions, the governing bodies have gradually limited themselves to legislative and other policy-making activities, eliminating the committees through which they previously wielded executive power. By the same token, superintendents have emerged as executive officers, charged with administering an educational program which conforms to the guidelines and policies of the board. This process has entailed the passing of the previous position of the superintendent as a clerk to the board, in many areas.[11]

Personal factors have also played an important role in shaping relationships between governing bodies and school superintendents. The significance of these relationships has, in many instances, been minimized since the influence of personal factors varies so greatly. Yet the positive effect of trust and confidence between board and superintendent is unmistakable. It can produce an effective legislative-executive combination where no legal guidelines exist. It can produce cooperation and effectiveness, even in the absence of crisis. In the last analysis, personal factors have molded the evolution of board-superintendent ties in a way that no amount of documentation can adequately characterize.[12]

For these reasons, what had been a master client relationship between board and superintendent, during the nineteenth century, gradually developed into a partnership during the twentieth. Much of this evolution grew out of the delineation of legislative and executive functions for the two institutions. Within the role of a policy-making, legislative body, the board could readily concentrate on the work of setting the direction for its constituents. Within the context of the guidelines established by boards, superintendents would turn their attention to executing those policies through administration of a program of education.

It is useful to note that the development of legislative-executive relationships which occurred in the American school district was vastly different than that which took place in the federal and state governments. In educational systems, boards and superintendents came into existence at different times and gradually established their respective identities only through a long and arduous process. In Washington and the state capitals, both branches were initially defined through written constitutions, with the succeeding period being devoted to modification and adjustment of those roles.

Another important aspect of the evolution of school board administrative relationships which has occurred, largely during the twentieth century, has been the evolution of the earlier board-superintendency relationship into a true board-administrative connection.

It comes as a surprise that this transformation should occur at such a late date, yet the pattern is in keeping with the general movement of institutional history. By present standards, the federal and state administrative structures of the 1800's were tiny. In this context, the size of educational administrations, usually limited to one person, was understandable if not strictly proportional to the size of the respective units.

Because the school superintendency did not, in many areas, attain executive status until a fairly late date, the establishment even of the most rudimentary administrative structures was often delayed. As long as the superintendent functioned largely as the clerk to the board, there was usually little necessity to hire assistants to the clerk.[13]

School administrations, like superintendencies, grew in response to the needs of governing boards. When environmental complexities created a range of tasks too wide for the single officer to handle alone, it became necessary for boards to authorize the establishment of additional positions. The pattern developed first during the closing decades of the nineteenth century in the major urban systems, where rising enrollments and a bewildering array of instructional, financial, and social concerns created the need for application of varied types of expertise to educational governance.

In many areas, the evolution of administration was tied to the development of ties between boards and superintendents. Early stages focused on efforts to allow the superintendent to devote full time to non-instructional concerns. In this context, responsibilities for teaching and coaching were often transferred from the

chief officer to other individuals. A subsequent step usually consisted of further moves to allow the superintendent to function as an administrator through provision of clerical and other staff to handle various technical and mechanical chores. During this phase, boards created administrative staff in order to facilitate the superintendent's development as chief administrator. The latest stage of the process, through which the board equipped the chief officer with a processional, as well as a clerical staff, is the logical culmination of the procedures. Through it, the administration assumed a professional, as well as a clerical character. The executive acquired the professional, as well as the support capacity necessary to carry out the wishes of the board.[14]

With the establishment of school administrations, the development of partnerships between governing boards and executives reached an important milestone. The educational executive, as well as the legislative mechanism, had truly become a branch of school government. It became possible for board and administration to cooperate and assist one another in pursuit of common goals.

Once established in American school districts, the pattern by which administrative staffs evolved also effected the nature of board-executive relationships. Unlike in state and local government, as well as the private sector, public education has not experienced wholesale growth of administration.

A number of authorities have concluded that this trend has adversely affected the work of school governance. M.J. Rathbone, former chairman of the board of the Standard Oil Corporation, remarked that central office staffs are barely adequate to keep their systems operating efficiently, much less cope with social issues, implement new approaches, and engage in professional negotiation.[15]

At the same time, however, limitations on administrative growth within individual districts, have made for more balanced relationships between educa-

tional legislative and executive branches. While state and federal bureaucracies have rapidly developed, making it difficult for legislatures to understand, let alone deal with, school staffs have grown at a more restrained rate. As a result of this process, school districts, perhaps more than any other national institution, are now structured to function as effective legislative-executive partnerships.

From a general standpoint, the years between the origins of American education and the mid-twentieth century witnessed the evolution of board-administrative relationships in the context of the establishment of school executives. Throughout the process, the character of interaction between the two institutions was dictated by the degree to which the superintendent-administration had developed. For much of the period, the single administrative officer was regarded as a legislative assistant, rather than as an executive. Only during the twentieth century did the arrangement approach the kind of partnership which had characterized federal and many state governments since the eighteenth century.

The reasons for this trend have already been discussed. Certainly the late arrival of the superintendency, during the mid-nineteenth century, and the fact that the office generally remained an appointive one, were among the most significant contributing factors.

The implication of the development is perhaps most important. Despite the fact that school administrations are still largely appointive, a rough balance between legislative and executive organs has been attained within the governance of American public education. The record attained by this balance, during recent years, should lend important insights into the present character and future workability of school board-administration relationships.

The Recent Perspective

The period since 1950 has witnessed dramatic developments in American public education. The disruption of traditional values, the growth of civil rights, changes in youthful populations, and mistrust of public institutions, have all impacted local school districts. Amid these trends, the relationship between governing boards and administrations has continued to evolve.

During the early 1950's the relationship proceeded as legislative-executive partnership in many areas of the nation. Convinced that administration of district education was beyond their role and capacity, many boards reverted to the status of educational legislatures and left executive responsibilities to the superintendent and his staff. This situation was paralleled by similar developments within school staffs. In some areas, the superintendent was viewed as the chief policy advisor of the board, the "boss" and dispenser of rewards and punishments within the personnel system.[16]

Reciprocal expectations which developed between the two branches of governance were those which exist between any legislature and executive. The board expected the superintendent to run a "tight ship" and be accountable for the activities of the system. The executive, on the other hand, expected that its recommendations should be given due consideration and that its efforts to implement board policies should be supported.[17]

The extent to which this situation prevailed varied with the size of individual districts. In smaller systems, it was not uncommon for boards to assume a role in administrative activities. The influence of the personal dimension of executive leadership already discussed, has been another important influence.

These patterns exerted an uneven impact on the range of local educational situations. Yet other, more general influences affect the board-administrative relationships in a more pervasive way. The major social and political developments which have marked the past two decades shaped and challenged the partnership which had come to characterize the governance of American public education.

The first and perhaps the most significant wave of influences which would affect the structure of board-administrative ties was the rise of social, special interest groups. Beginning with the 1954 Supreme Court decision on school desegregation, various social action groups became increasingly involved in school politics and internal school affairs. What had been voiceless segments of the school community aggressively began to demand that school officials consider their special needs.[18]

As a result of the rise of special interest groups, as well as other factors, school boards and administrations also increasingly faced the imposition of an unprecedented number of legal restraints. These mechanisms grew out of various sources and motivations. Grant programs, administered by Washington and state governments, were increasingly accompanied by guidelines prescribed by various agencies. Federal and state courts dictated additional requirements through their authority to enforce constitutional provisions, laws, and government regulations.[19]

In most cases, the initial response of boards and administrations to the actions of special interest groups and regulatory requirements were common ones. Both legislative and executive branches of school administration usually acted to maintain the status quo and prevent the encroachment of what were viewed as outside forces. In most instances, the two institutions acted as partners, pooling their resources to delay the implementation of new regulations or guidelines. Boards resorted to legislative activity in an effort to curtail the regulations of state and federal agencies, while administrations acted through implementation of board policies and other mechanisms.[20]

With the passage of time, a number of what had been movements of special interests won acceptance in local school districts. In these instances, boards and administrations eventually cooperated to implement federal and state guidelines.

In most cases, however, the situations of the past two decades which most challenged relationships within public school governance were those which involved changes within districts, rather than those which were responses to "outside" forces. While federal and state intervention in district affairs usually provoked a united reaction, internal developments often undermined the most effective of board-administrative partnerships.[21]

A number of social and political forces have acted from within the structure of individual school systems during the past two decades. These have ranged from some of the special interest groups which originally moved through federal and state regulation, to school staffs, to student populations.

The influence of special interests has always been present in American education. Indeed, much of the pluralism inherent to the system is an interaction of special interests. Yet the impact of various social groups has rapidly accelerated during the 1960's and 70's. Years of efforts to impose regulation on many districts through Washington or state governments convinced blacks, women, the handicapped, and other groups, that action from within districts was required.

The results of this recognition were new moves by many special interests to obtain representation on school boards. Although these efforts were not always successful, they often produced significant changes in the composition of local boards. One authority has concluded that,

> "...no longer predominantly selected by blue ribbon committees or from associates and friends of existing school board members, new members came from special interest groups within the community and were charged with the responsibility of representing their group's interests."[22]

The impact of these changes on board-administrative relationships was considerable. Board members often acted according to the dictates and/or needs

of well-defined groups, rather than in response to more general perceptions of community needs. In many cases, the traditional alignment between legislative and executive branches of administration was seriously disrupted. Superintendents were forced to become negotiators among the increasingly diverse interests and concerns of individual boards.[23]

In some instances, changes in the character and attitudes of school boards went beyond the rise of special interest participation in board activities. School board members often concluded that their common interests justified the formation of national and state organizations, which tended to work independently of administrators. Obviously, the self-consciousness engendered on boards by such groups, also tended to disrupt the traditional arrangement.[24]

Yet changes in the compositions and consciousness of school boards brought about by community groups were not the only internal developments which affected the character of legislative-executive relationships during the 1960's and 70's. Important developments within school staffing also exerted a considerable impact.

The most pervasive such change was the emergence of collective bargaining among teachers in many districts. To a large extent impelled by the action of other special interest groups, school employees increasingly formed unions or other associations, employed professional representatives, and generally demanded greater roles in educational decision-making.

Teachers quickly became the most powerful group to seek recognition. Their interests involved personal economic concerns, and working conditions, as well as educational functions. As professionals, with educational backgrounds comparable to many administrators, teachers could demand the capability for decision-making. As instructional personnel, they could claim the right to negotiate concerning a wide range of educational policies.[25]

The growth of collective bargaining among teachers has exerted a varied impact on the evolution of school board-administration relationships during recent years. To a certain extent, the process has gained an increased role in decision-making for instructional personnel. This is, of course, most evident in the areas of economic concerns and working conditions. Unions and other associations, through their pressure on educational governance, have gained a voice in determining teacher salaries, working hours, and other conditions of employment. The record in the determination of instructional policy has been less clear, however. Often, the adversary relationships with boards and administrations engendered by the association process have actually minimized the involvement of teachers in curriculum determination and definition.[26]

From a general standpoint, the rise of teacher unionization may have produced greater cooperation between boards and superintendents, although the range of that activity may have been reduced. While the movement has occasionally produced legislative-executive conflict, for the most part the specter of employee restiveness has pushed both branches of educational government into greater cooperation. This alignment has been most visible in salary negotiations, where boards and superintendents have been compelled to present a united response to demands for changes in salaries and working conditions.[27]

Beyond changes induced by special interests and collective bargaining, developments among student populations have also impacted the character of board-administration interaction during recent years. Student activism and rebellion became especially visible on the campuses during the 1960's. Soon afterward, an increasing assertiveness among pupil populations began to mark the nation's elementary and secondary schools.

At first, much of this activity took the form of random aggression and frustration. Eventually, however, it became apparent that students, like other

special interest groups, were gaining cohesion and self-consciousness. Still another socio-political force which would challenge existing patterns of governance thus coalesced.[28]

A prime aspect of the student movement which confronted boards and administrations was the legal one. Calls for student rights were often answered by demands for student responsibility. The crisis of students rights and power, writes one authority, was "... part of the problem of pluralism in that it challenges the larger society to acknowledge the needs, interests, and desire for self-determination of another minority element."[29] Connected with the basic rights issue, lay the question of student representation in policy-making. Here the ground once occupied by school boards and executives was once again constricted by an emerging special interest group.[30]

The impact of developments among student populations on board-administration relationships remains to be defined. To a certain extent, it seems that legislative and executive bodies have worked together in dealing with this special interest group, much as they have functioned in dealing with others. Yet the rise of student power in the public schools presents a number of unique problems for governance. As the clientele of boards and administrations, this group wields a powerful argument for involvement in decision-making, an argument which many board members have already recognized. A related concern, the question of discipline in the classroom, further clouds the issue by touching other special interest groups, most notably teachers, as well as governing bodies and superintendents. The interaction of all of these factors remains to be played out.[31]

In addition to special interest groups, a host of general conditions have also affected the development of relationships within educational governance during recent years. Changing patterns of school finance have increased state support in many systems. As a result, boards and administrations have had to become more

adroit at pulling dollars while maintaining local funding. Professional knowledge in many aspects of education has also greatly expanded. The rise of complex administrative and technical capabilities has made available new forms of information to those involved in governance. The expansion of educational research has brought forth new data concerning teaching and learning. Technology itself has increased both the problems and the capacities of educational governance.[32]

The impact of these patterns on board-administration relationships remains to be evaluated. As general influences, they may aid effective partnerships in coping with various challenges. Yet none, of itself will produce dramatic progress. An important sphere of action remains the personal, ongoing relationship between boards and executives.

A survey of the development of relationships between the principal components of public school governance, thus reveals a number of noteworthy trends. Perhaps the most striking aspect is the length of time required for boards and administrator's to attain equality. This condition appears to have arisen from the fact that, unlike the legislative-executive processes which exist at federal and state levels, the two branches of school governance were not created in formal constitutions. Related to this condition was the fact that, with few exceptions, school administrations have been appointed, directly or indirectly, by the boards. Because of this situation, the development of true executives was long delayed. Even today, the fact that boards and administrations are not both elective has produced educational executives vastly different from their federal and state counterparts.

Beyond the contrast between the development of school and government administration which appears in the preceding pages, the salient aspect of the development of board-administrative relationships is the limited time during which

the two bodies have functioned as rough equals. Only during the past twenty years has any sort of parity existed between boards and administrations. Coincidentally, this interval has also seen the emergence of dramatic new forces such as special interest groups which have challenged the status quo.

As a result of these developments, it is altogether possible that relationships within public school governance are beginning a whole new period of development. With administrations having at last attained the status of executive branches, possibilities for genuine interaction exist. The direction which events take will be significant, not merely from an academic viewpoint, but for the well-being of most of American education.

Models of Public School Governance

Many efforts at understanding the past and future of public school governance have focused on the development of models of board-administration relationships. Through these constructs, the outcomes of the evolution of these connections may be charted, and efforts made to comprehend and direct future trends.

As in the analysis of the history of these relationships, research using models recognizes that, because of the pluralistic nature of American education, no construct can fully describe all of the complex structures and movements which exist. Instead, efforts are made to reach general perspectives which may be applied in a variety of situations.

Much of the research concerning board-administration relationships which has already occurred has focused on two models of governance: the so-called harmony, or bureaucratic model, and the conflict, or pluralistic model. Based on differing assumptions of human and governmental behavior, these two approaches summarize the roles of current opinion in this area.

The Harmony and Pluralistic Models

The harmony, or bureaucratic model is rooted in legalism. Its basis is the notion of a strict division of legislative and executive responsibilities between board and administration. The harmony which supposedly exists in this view arises from the condition that each of the two branches operates within its particular sphere of expertise and influences.

To a large extent, the model is the product of the Progressive thinkers of the early twentieth century, who sought to separate politics from education. These individuals felt that isolation from community interest groups would protect the objectivity of board-administration deliberations.[33]

Authorities differ on the precise character of responsibilities maintained by boards within the harmony model. Some have seen the role as "passive".[34] Others have cautioned that judicious restraint from involvement in executive areas should not be seen as inactivity.[35] Most agree that since legislative power in districts legally rests with the board, that body's best function is legislation for the community's educational needs.

In this context, it is recommended that boards concentrate on ratification or modification of proposed programs or other initiatives, and leave the administration of these efforts to the executive. The only executive action recommended for intensive board activity is a traditional one, the selection of a superintendent.[36]

By contrast, the position of the superintendent and administration, within the harmony model, is a narrowly executive one. The administration is charged with the responsibility for carrying out board policy. It is also the repository of the professional skills necessary to carry out that task.

The functions of the executive under this model reflect this fact. In many instances, it is noted that the administration may propose a program of action. In all cases, however, it is suggested that the superintendent and his staff refrain

from involvement in the boards deliberations, unless specifically called upon for professional advice. Since power legally rests with the board, that body is, of course, free to disregard the administration's advice if it so desires.[37]

With the respective positions of boards and school administrations so defined, it should come as no surprise that the harmony model sees interaction between these two institutions as occurring within strictly prescribed guidelines. Within a framework of cooperation, mutual respect, and even team work, legislative and executive branches fulfill their functions.

Authorities have advanced differing opinions concerning the details of some of those activities. The source of policies proposed for board consideration remains an object of controversy. Various individuals have argued that legislation should originate with the board itself. A more general consensus seems to focus on executive initiation, however.[38]

This approach sees the superintendent in the role of federal and state government executives, who make recommendations for board action based on information gained from a variety of sources. In either instance, the formal, legislative authority remains with the board.

Closely allied to this concern is the issue of whether the superintendent should expect the board to follow his leadership in matters of policy. A certain body of literature maintains that the superintendent should exert no initiative at all, functioning simply as the agent of the board in carrying out policy. Most authorities maintain, however, that, in the mold of the President and state governors, it is the function of the superintendent to furnish leadership. In the last analysis, it is noted, it is still the prerogative of the board to accept or reject that leadership.[39]

A considerable body of thought has been developed concerning the dimensions of board relations with the superintendent under the harmony model, especially

from the perspective of the governing body. If the board is to function as a true legislature, Archie Dykes notes, it must not become involved in the minutiae of administrative activities. The function of the body, he affirms, is to see that schools are properly administered without actually administering them. In its role as a legislature, the collective nature of the board is also highlighted. The legal principle that members have no authority outside of official meetings is maintained. Members are encouraged to accept majority decisions, even when contrary to personal opinions.[40] In extreme cases, they are cautioned not to commit themselves to any position or promise, other than a willingness to discuss the issue with the superintendent, or present it to the board during formal session.[41]

While compensating for some characteristics associated with local conditions or personal behavior, the harmony model contains a strong, structural emphasis. Prescribed guidelines of conduct, both traditional and legal, govern the limits of human action. The emphasis of the entire approach becomes position, rather than interaction. Proponents maintain that, as long as legitimate roles are maintained, the interaction will take care of itself.

The assumptions and structure of the harmony model differ markedly from those of the second approach to public school governance, the pluralistic or conflict model. Based on interaction rather than position, this approach focuses on the fluidity and dynamics of school governance.[42]

Like the harmony model, the pluralistic approach attributes roles to the board and administration. Basically, these roles are those of legislator and executive. Yet the positions are seen as starting points, rather than as spheres of activity. The process is based on conflict and influence, rather than on trust and mutual respect. Each actor attempts to maximize his or her power through a variety of means.[43]

At the heart of the pluralistic model is the conviction that educational governance is a political process, that it cannot be separated from the patterns of power and influence which mark all other forms of human activity. To a large extent, this model is a response to the harmony approach. One of its basic tenets is the notion that the legalism and prescribed activity in that model is insufficient to describe the behavior of the real world.[44]

In the pluralistic model, the school board and superintendent endeavor to govern their educational systems while extending their own influence. For the board, such activity may take the form of involvement in administration, or in the initiation of policy. In this context, boards are seen as using their position as sole legally-constituted authority in many districts to assert their influence.

Much of the pluralistic approach focuses on the position of the superintendent. This is not surprising, since the educational executive's role is often one of the most ill-defined and potential-laden in all of public education.

The pluralists emphasize that the active superintendent may play a major role in school governance by "drawing an understandable picture of which duties rightfully belong to the board and which rightfully belong to him."[45] The extent to which this process occurs, will of course, depend on the nature of the environment and personalities involved.

The means through which superintendents may attempt to define the process of school governance may vary. Pluralist thinking, however, emphasizes informal mechanisms not strictly delineated in educational policies and procedures. These may include a wide range of methodologies. Enlightened leadership has been identified as a strong approach to the executive function which, because of its effectiveness, literally co-opts the board. The development of a constituency in the community has also been seen as a useful device. Although most superintendents, of course, remain appointees of school governing bodies, local approval for

executive actions can in turn exert a major effect of the behavior of boards. This particular approach to educational governance is unique to American schools. No other federal or state executives have the opportunity to develop an indirect constituency among their citizen populations.

Beyond these means, there are, of course, the informal avenues of executive politics. In order to "straighten out" legislative thinking, superintendents are advised to keep their boards busy considering policy so that they will have little time or energy to dabble in administrative functions.[46] The merits and disadvantages of providing agendas to board members in advance have been discussed. One superintendent advises that delaying the distribution will make for maximum executive control and head off the development of organized opposition.[47] In all cases, superintendents are advised to make maximum use of the control they have over the timing and makeup of agendas. It is noted that recommendations should be presented in such a way that, if rejected, they will not produce embarrassment.[48]

Outside of actual board meetings, the pluralistic approach highlights the use of executive influence as a tool for dealing with individual board members. One observer has cynically concluded that

> "...the care and feeding of board members is also quite important and one superintendent paternalistically advises that regular places (at the meeting table) be provided for board members so that they, like students, will have their own places so as to do their best work."[49]

The same writer further advises that "... providing 'refreshments' ranging from sirloin steaks after the meeting, to 'good chocolate candy' during meetings", is often effective.[50]

Under the pluralistic model, the legal roles prescribed for school boards and administrations are only starting points. Each branch of school government is expected to use the formal and informal mechanisms at its disposal.

In addition to its focus on the respective roles of educational executives, the pluralistic model also describes the relationship between school governments and their communities. Proponents of this approach argue that the harmony approach is notably silent on this important aspect of educational governance. They note that, under the harmony model, the board and superintendent frequently work together to curb pluralism and protect their own positions.

Paul Schmidt and Fred Voss have concluded that, because the two institutions already possess the power of governance in individual districts, any challenges to the status quo will involve weakening of their own authority. Schmidt and Voss do not abuse board members to express minority viewpoints because this would invite public challenges to the status quo.[51]

Pluralistic thinkers also assume that, at some point, the conflicting interests which exist in most communities will gain representation on boards. After this occurs, board-superintendent relationships will operate, not as bipolar dialogue of power, but as a multi-centered process. Under these circumstances, consensus and disagreement will not simply involve a monolithic legislative and a monolithic legislative branch, but a group of competing parties.[52]

The extent to which various special interests are able to gain representation may, of course, vary from district to district. It has been pointed out that in small towns and suburban areas, members of ethnic minorities, and the severely disadvantaged would have a difficult time gaining election to board seats. Even when factors of race and class do not appear, it has been argued, parents of children with special educational requirements are not likely to become a significant political force. Far greater opportunity for such groups to become influential, it is claimed, exist in large cities, where the sizes of such groups are larger.[53]

Another aspect of school-community relations which receives emphasis under some pluralistic models is the definition of 'community' and 'public'. Pluralist

thinkers such as Schmidt and Voss have argued that, unless extremely sensitive issues are raised, suburban and small city boards and administrations have only to deal with the 5-10 percent of the electorate who bother to vote or become active in school elections. In this context, the need for a general atmosphere of trust and confidence emphasized in the harmony model may become superfluous. Board and superintendent may want to 'keep things quiet', and insure that larger numbers of voters do not join the electorate, in an effort to satisfy the small proportion who vote.[54]

Amid the various special interest groups which exist under the pluralistic approach, leadership becomes the direction of that group which best uses the tools at its disposal. There is no question of whether the superintendent is supposed to lead and the board is supposed to follow, policy is set by whichever branch holds the upper hand, or by whichever interest groups can make the branches do its will. Again, the emphasis is on what works, and what occurs, rather than on what is supposed to work.[55]

As the two roles of current perspective concerning board-administration relationships, the harmony and pluralistic models present a stark contrast. The former approach, rooted in assumptions that trust and respect characterize human relations, is opposed by the latter, grounded in the belief that power and influence are the chief motivators. The emphasis on consensus and the status quo, inherent in the harmony model, contrasts with the conflict and fluidity of the pluralistic view.

Obviously neither approach completely describes the operation of public school boards and administrations. Yet each yields valuable insights concerning the relationships between these two institutions.

It is conceded that no human institutions can function entirely within rigid, theoretical limitations, as dictated by the harmony model. Still, boards and superintendents do possess essentially legislative and executive functions as defined by the harmony model. The precise limits of these functions are not identical with those of the President and the Congress, or those of governors and state legislatures, yet boards do make regulations and adminstrations execute them.

Part of this condition arises from the historical development of the governance of public education. Over a period of one hundred years, school boards demonstrated that citizen bodies could not themselves administer complex educational establishments. By reverting to legislative roles, the boards reserved final say over the outcomes of schools without becoming overly involved in the generation of those outcomes.

In addition to its capacity for defining the essentials of roles within educational governance, the harmony model proves surprisingly accurate as a mechanism for understanding government processes. Admittedly, not all school governance takes place in an atmosphere of trust and respect. Yet even the pluralists admit that power politics does not develop in many board-administration relationships. Ronald Loveridge notes that,

> "Transplanting to the educational sector prescriptions apparently derived from a consideration of urban municipal politics seems to us to be inappropriate, especially in the context of medium-sized and small school districts outside of core cities."[56]

Loveridge concludes that many board members in small communities actually dislike participation in traditional politics. Instead, he notes, they seek board seats because of the public service flavor of these jobs.[57]

This should not imply that political oriented individuals are not found on school boards, nor that board actions are not without political contexts. It should,

however, be sufficient to demonstrate that, at least in this area of community affairs, trust and respect may indeed be determinants of individual and group action.

Perhaps paradoxically, the pluralistic model also accurately describes a number of important aspects of school board-administration relationships. It is conceded that few institutions can function without specific legal and/or semantic basis, yet it is also true that few if any function entirely within those boundaries. Here the pluralistic viewpoint points up the weaknesses of much of the available literature concerning the governance of public education. Pluralism makes it clear that influence is also a commodity in human relations and that individuals and groups will naturely tend to maximize their own influence.[58]

It is also apparent that pluralism may justifiably be employed to analyze interaction within university governance. While it seems obvious that high power, pressure politics, may not always apply in local districts, it also seems evident that a plurality of forces do operate. Special interest groups may exert varying impacts on educational governance; these influences are nevertheless felt. To define governance exclusively in terms of board and superintendent is to imply that the process takes place in a vacuum according to a legal script.

The chief asset of the pluralistic approach as a description of the governance process seems to be the flexibility which it introduced into board-administrative relationships. During much of recent history, manuals, texts, and articles have characterized the legislative-executive interaction as if it were cast in stone. While the pluralistic emphasis on power politics may occasionally be overdrawn, the model's realistic approach to events is long overdue.

It should also be rememberd that, while these two models do represent contrasting views of the same developments, their implications may overlap. A case in point involves the relationship of boards and administrations to the

community. Pluralists point out that the harmony model neglects the public as a political force. They argue that, by seeking to avoid controversy and the public attention which accompanies it, boards and superintendents seek to preserve the status quo and their own power. Yet, under the pluralistic model, is it not natural for components of the governance process to do just that? Apparently, in some cases, the implications of pluralism and self interest actually contradict one another.

Other Models of Board-Superintendent Relationships

The harmony and pluralistic models are not, of course, the only models of board-superintendent relationships which currently exist. Various deficiencies in both of these approaches are addressed in constructs as the systems, human relations, and administrative leadership model. Although no one of these viewpoints completely explains the workings of public school governance, each contains important insights into the process.

The Systems Model

The systems, or environmental model, usually attributed to Laurence Iannaccone and Frank W. Lutz, emphasizes the forces affecting governance which exist outside school boards and administrative units. It sees the workings of school districts as a complex interaction of various sytems, some within formal educational governance, others outside it.

Originally, this approach arose in reaction to the efforts of Progressive reformers of the early twentieth century, who attempted to take politics out of education. It also developed in response to the pluralistic and harmony models, which placed the entire governance process in the context of board-superintendent relationships.[59]

Iannaccone, Lutz, and others have contended that school districts are not, as the Progressives would hope, institutions which can somehow be isolated from the rest of society. On the contrary, they note that schools readily respond to changes in their environments. Thus, developments in the socio-economic status of an area will influence district politics, and, in turn, impact the system's educational program.[60]

The steps by which this process typically occurs link the district's populace, to its school board, and the administration of educational programs. The process begins, not in formal governance mechanisms, but in the community. Changing conditions in an area, such as the growth of new housing, will produce a rise in general, socio-economic status. By the same token, desertion of a center city or other area may produce a decline in socio-economic status.

One of the crucial linkages in the systems model ties changes in socio-economic status to the emergence or disappearance of conflict within educational constituencies. Iannaccone and Lutz have argued that this status is positively related to levels of conflict in school board elections-the higher the status, the higher the degree of conflict.[61]

Once conflict increases within districts, the systems approach charts any number of possible courses for change. Rising conflict within board elections may open the way for defeats of school board members. These defeats may, inturn, produce the removal of superintendents. In those instances where removals do take place, the model suggests that the successor administrators will be drawn from other districts, rather than internally.[62]

An important point in the systems approach seems to be the linkage between the development of conflict and the defeat of board members. If conflict does produce such defeats, the removal of superintendents and wholesale changes in programming appear to result. If board members weather the storm, then the other changes do not occur.[63]

Strictly speaking, the systems approach is not an effort to describe the development of school board-superintendent relationships. It approaches this connection as part of a wider scenario. Board and administration emerge only at the conclusion of the model's process.

Indeed, the systems on which this approach is based on are social systems rather than mechanisms of governance. According to Iannaccone, Lutz, and others, it is in the community, among the ethnic and other groups which form neighborhoods and towns, that the shape of educational governance is determined. The social and economic currents which run through these environments produce the alignments of boards and administrations which carry on the operation of schools.

The model describes school boards and administrations, the governance system, as responding to the influence of the various social systems. When the level of conflict in the various social systems rises beyond a certain point, it overcomes the stability of the governance system and produces changes, first in the board, and later in the superintendency.

Within educational governance itself, the board is definitely the keypin of the systems approach. Located between the social system and the administration, the condition of the board determines the shape of the executive and of educational programming. If the board is able to adjust to new conditions, or to alter them, administration and program will not be swept away. If the board fails, the currents at work within the community will reshape the educational system.

Like the harmony and pluralistic models, the systems approach to public school governance possesses a number of important strengths and weaknesses. The approach's strongest asset appears to be its recognition of the role of environmental factors in board-administration relationships. While the other models note the existence of these factors, they emphasize the traditional mechanisms of

government, the legislature and executive. In one sense, the difference between the harmony and pluralistic models and the systems approach is the difference between traditional, and social approaches to history. While the former concentrates on the so-called elites of society, the latter focuses on the broad 'mainstream' of human affairs.

Another noteworthy aspect of the systems model is its attempt to link developments in communities with changes in systems of educational governance. In an area generally characterized by vague generalizations, the systems approach posits a direct, relationship between levels of socio-economic status and degrees of conflict. This attempt to document linkages extends into the governance process itself, as changes in the composition of school boards are directly linked to administrative changes.

Finally, the systems approach also includes an orientation toward the character of educational programming. Curiously, the harmony and pluralistic approaches, in their concentration on the procedural aspects of governance, seem to neglect the nature of the outcomes generated by those procedures. The linkage of school programs and policy to boards and superintendents is crucial. It is the thread which shapes the nature of the curricula, and, therefore, the products of individual districts.[64]

The systems model of public school governance also possesses a number of deficiencies, however. These drawbacks seriously limit its effectiveness as an analysis of board-superintendent interaction.

As noted above, the systems view is not a description of board-administration relationships, it is a model of the impact of social change on the governance process. The approach is so focused on general, social and economic patterns that it fails to delineate the procedures through which those patterns move. A particular failure of the model is its inability to describe how and when social

change actually produces developments in educational governance. It describes conflict in school politics as rising, until school board members are defeated and wholesale change results, or until boards make adjustments and avoid these changes. Yet, the make-or-break criteria are never spelled out. No attempt is made to foresee and delineate the means by which boards and administrations may deal with social developments.

The systems approach also assumes a passive role in governance both for boards and superintendents. Of the two branches, the legislative appears to have greater potential, since it may at least accommodate social changes. The administration is given little or no leadership role, since changes in the composition of the board will inevitably trigger its replacement.

Various other aspects of the systems model have also been disputed. Recent efforts to verify statistically significant relationships between changes in socio-economic status and levels of discontent in districts have proven unsuccessful. Although findings were in the directions predicted by Iannaccone and Lutz, actual significance was not present.[65]

Research which focused on relationships between defeats of school board members and removals of superintendents have revealed a similar pattern. There were more instances of superintendent turnover within a sample period following incumbent defeats than following elections where no defeats occurred. In no case, however, did the results approach statistical significance.[66]

Critics of the systems approach generally fail to buy the assumption that the influx of new citizens in communities will produce unrest and changes in educational policy. Without this unrest, they note, the rest of the changes projected by the model will not occur.[67]

The Human Relations Approach

While the systems model places a heavy emphasis on environmental factors, human relations approaches accent the role of interpersonal dynamics in shaping educational governance. The human relations viewpoint is related to the systems model; since both focus on the impact of social influences at the aggregate, micro-level, human relations concentrates on the individual, micro-dimension.

At the heart of the human relations approach is the notion that school board members, like other persons, respond to social needs and forces. Through these needs, it is noted, they obtain a sense of identity. For the most part, social needs are satisfied through informal structures. Thus, although a school board is defined and operated by legal or other criteria, its human relations environment is defined in nonformal terms.[68]

All of this produces what might be termed a school board culture. This culture, according to Frank Lutz, consists of "...artifacts, resources, values, beliefs, roles, traditions, and a literature which assists in perpetuating (them)".[69] The school board culture arises from the legal basis of the board's existence, and, even more importantly, from the informal interaction of board members. Through progressive meetings and other contacts, board members begin to relate easily to one another. Shared general responsibilities eventually become more significant than differing viewpoints on specific issues.[70]

The influence of school board culture is said to be particularly evident in the socialization of new board members in the perpetuation of attitudes from board to board. In the former case, board culture frequently becomes strong enough to overcome individual attachments to special interest groups. In this context, new members may be exhorted to behave "as a board member should", instead of acting on the impetus of "outside" groups.

The responsibilities of board membership may also play a part in the process. It has frequently observed that members may be elected as 'one issue candidates', by seizing a particularly sensitive point and turning it into a viable campaign. Unfortunately, or fortunately, the one issue candidate cannot become the one issue board member. Deliberation and decision on a wide range of issues are required from the elected candidate. The onset of these responsibilities, adherents of the human relations model maintain, create a commonality of interests with other board members and reduce ties with constituencies.[71]

The transmission of attitudes from board to board is largely the long term dimension of the socialization process. Because in most cases, the incumbent board is larger than the board-elect, the traditional board culture is transmitted by sheer weight of numbers. Other factors also aid the transmission process, however. Publications and meetings of school board associations may strengthen common beliefs and values. Patterns of interaction with district administrators may build other elements of board culture.[72]

Although the vast bulk of human relations research has concerned school boards, administrative structures form another important area for application of this model. Like boards, administrations, especially central office staffs, possess common values and interests. As in the case of board processes, individual socialization becomes an important aspect of the perpetuation of an administrative 'culture'. In a collective sense, group socialization, on a district level and through association with other districts, this culture is perpetuated through time and across geographic areas.[73]

The human relations model opens up various possibilities for the development of board-superintendent relationships. In districts where cooperation between legislature and executive is the norm, the culture is oriented toward this pattern. In some respects, school systems of this type may possess a board-administrative culture, where consensus is the norm and conflict is to be avoided.[74]

The human relations model also contains the possibility for cultural conflict. Where board and administration frequently contend over important issues, a key element in each of the cultures becomes opposition to or criticism of the executive or legislative program. In these cases, the socialization process may become a competitive one, in which the superintendent attempts to co-opt new board members to his own method of thinking, and the incumbent board tries to counter this approach by perpetuating its own culture. In some instances, boards may also take the initiative, attempting to choose new administrators sympathetic to their outlooks. The implications of conflict in the human relations model are interesting. Because conflict becomes ingrained, as part of a set of group values, the possibilities for extended contention between board and superintendent are considerable. How long conflict will exist before the electorate or other forces intervene has been the object of conjecture. Sufficient research in this area is lacking.[75]

Obviously, most interaction between school board and adminstrative cultures falls somewhere between the cooperation and the conflict described above. This is in keeping with the mutual purpose and mutual tension which characterize ties between legislative and executive branches of governance.

Like other models, the human relations approach is not a complete description of the workings of school board-administration relationships. The view contains a number of useful perspectives and also some significant limitations.

In focusing on interpersonal interaction at the micro level, within governance, the model picks up where the systems model leaves off. It concentrates on the dynamics of personal interaction within educational governance, rather than outside of it. In so doing, the approach treats some of the internal influences which touch a wide variety of board-administration situations.

These points deserve underlining. Most models of school governance see board-administration interaction as a product of specific issues, in the case of the pluralistic and systems models, or of legal definition of roles,in the case of the harmony model. The human relations approach adds an important, informal social dimension to this scenario. It is the same set of factors which builds peer group interaction in other interpersonal situations. The impact of this factor is not to be taken lightly. Consideration of the strength of peer influences in work or school situations will testify to its power.[76]

In focusing on mutual responsibility as the basis for common action, the human relations model identifies the basis for the development of 'cultures' at board and administrative levels. In this process, it may also lend insights for the manipulation and evolution of these relationships. Because shared responsibilities build common action within legislative and executive branches of school governance, it figures that the same obligations might stimulate common action between boards and administrations.

Like the other models of educational governance, the human relations approach also has its critics. It has been noted that the model pays too much attention to group processes within the board and not enough to board-superintendent relationships. This criticism seems to arise out of the fact that most human relations work has concentrated on the internal workings of groups. Cohesive social structures obviously form more convenient research topics than the areas between groups.[77]

Critics also point out that the human relations view almost totally neglects, and even denies the influence of groups outside school governance. In so doing, the approach becomes a sort of mirror image of the systems model, which places a major emphasis on groups and processes outside governance in the community.

The point here seems to be the all powerful role which human relations gives to school board culture. So strong is this culture, that it supposedly can cause members of special interest groups to discard their traditional views in favor of a collective board outlook. Most critics of this model doubt that any governance culture can become so powerful.[78]

The Administrative Leadership Model

A third important alternative to the harmony and pluralistic approaches to board-administrative relationships is a collection of theories which comprise what might be called the administrative leadership model. This viewpoint, which emphasizes the position of the superintendent within public school governance is probably a combination of elements of other models.

Obviously, the focus of the administrative leadership approach is the educational executive. In this sense, the model parallels views of other governmental units which emphasize the role of the executive. From a historical perspective, it is pointed out that in education, as in other concerns, the rising complexity of issues has favored executive, rather than legislative decision-making. The legislature has the final say over policy, but the executive proposes and executes the rules. Administrative regulations play another important part in this leadership model. Established to facilitate administrative functions on a day-to day basis, these 'subrules' actually are policies made without direct board action. They represent another accrual of power within the district into the hands of the educational executive.[79]

In support of this position, proponents point to evidence that many superintendents essentially 'run' districts with relatively little contact with board members. They note that while boards play a role, most governance is in the hands of the executive.[80]

From a procedural standpoint, the administrative leadership approach incorporates elements of both the harmony and pluralistic models. Within its context, the administrator-superintendent may act through purely legal means, or through 'implied' powers as well. Since the orientation of the approach is executive leadership, however, it seems logical that the superintendent interested in maximizing influence would use a full variety of tools.

From an environmental perspective, the administrative approach sees the effective executive as the best means of dealing with the numerous problems which confront American schools. In this context, the model bears much in common with the so-called great man theory of history. This theory sees certain individuals as possessing the necessary qualities to cope with and shape events, rather than being inundated by them.[81] In the context of the local district, the administrative, as well as the semantic implications of this viewpoint are obvious. What better individual is there to meet the difficult issues of community education than a superintendent? One issue of a major American educational publication pictorially sums up the issue as it pictures the chief administrator in Superman's garb![82]

While the most prominent feature of the administrative leadership model is the executive, the mechanics of board superintendent relationships also occupy an important place. Administrative leadership does not mean administrative fiat. The position of the board persists even under the strongest school executives.

A fundamental element of this model is the basis of the growth of administrative power. One source, the increasing complexity of educational issues, has already been implied here. The major intricacies of modern school administration may cause boards to entrust most decision-making to a capable professional, a superintendent with a proven record of facing and surmounting these situations.[83]

Political convenience frequently proves to be another basis of board reliance on superintendents. The precise motives for such an approach may vary. In many

instances, boards may prefer to use the executive to 'take the heat off themselves', using the administration to take the blame for particularly risky courses of action. In others, where the superintendent is particulary respected in the community, the board may prefer to feed on that popularity. The implications of this latter approach are particularly interesting. They represent a complete inversion of the early position of the superintendency, which existed as an assistant to the board. They also portray the educational executive in much the same context as a president or state governor, using personal popularity and respect to influence the course of legislation and events.[84]

Obviously, much of the success of the administrative leadership model hinges on the effectiveness of the superintendent. Although the board retains ultimate responsibility for extension or termination of adminsitrative tenure, "ability to get the job done" becomes the final criteria of success or failure.[85]

In this context, the executive with personal power, with charisma, often becomes the most desirable commodity. Charisma is difficult to define, getting a grasp of it has been defined as "...like trying to carry a fog home in your pocket".[86] It is a persuasive quality, the ability to move others to action and produce results. It has been characterized as the possession of "...enough passion, courage, and vision to convince those around him that one not only knows how to cope, but also (knows) where programs are going and why".[87]

If, as the definition suggests, charisma is composed of the ability to convince, it is indeed an elusive quality. Because this ability also hinges on the power to accomplish, the administrator who possesses one, much less both of these traits, may indeed be hard to find.

Still, the administrative leadership model remains a viable avenue for effective educational governance. Experience suggests that the approach be judged by its ability to produce results within local districts.

In a general sense, it might be questioned whether the administrative leadership model is actually an approach to board-superintendent relationships at all. It is true that the approach is not oriented toward a single dimension of legislative-executive interaction, as the harmony and pluralistic models.

While it embraces a number of means of governance, this model does represent a distinctive approach to the conduct of public affairs. Its focus on a portion of the educational environment is analogous to the system model's emphasis on the community and the human relations approach's concentration on the board.

In this context, a few strengths and shortcomings of the administrative leadership model might be listed. Much of the potential of the approach as a description of board-superintendent relationships stems from its comprehensiveness. From a functional standpoint, this model is not tied to legal or political procedures. It includes a wide variety of means of governance.

The model also accommodates the shifting realities of political motivation. The school board may use the superintendent primarily for professional expertise, as a 'fall guy', or as a source of community support. At different times, any or all of these techniques may be employed.

Perhaps most importantly, the administrative leadershp model seems to satisfy what may be an organizational need for unified direction. This should not imply that the model is undemocratic, since the board, and indirectly, the electorate, are the ultimate judges of the educational outcomes which arise. Yet, especially in periods of uncertainty or difficulty, groups and organizations often turn to an established or trusted figure for leadership. In the case of the school district, this figure becomes the superintendent.[88]

Balancing these strengths of the administrative leadership approach are various weaknesses; most of which concern the legality of placing the educational executive at the center of school governance.

Critics of this approach charge that it is borrowed from analysis of state and local governments, systems which bear little in common with educational governance. They reason that the legal definition of superintendency, without an electoral constitutency, makes the office inappropriate as a focal point of the governance process. How can such an executive, they question, become a means of increasing the popularity of the board, when the approval of the office can never be registered in any type of election? The appointive nature of the school superintendent, it is noted, along with other limitations on the office, makes it off limits for the application of leadership theories developed at other levels of government.[89]

Critics of the administrative leadership approach also claim that it reflects a retreat from the complexities which are inevitable in public affairs. They reason that group decision-making, however cumbersome, is the one approach which involves wide segments of community populations. In a setting uniquely structured to foster group participation, leadership by the superintendent is seen as an unfortunate abdication of responsiblities.[90]

The preceding is not intended as an all-encompassing discussion of models of board-superintendent relationships. Within it, however, are summarized the range of alternative view of public school governance. Varying dimensions are observed. Approaches which concentrate on the types of procedures employed, such as the harmony and pluralistic models, contrast with those which focus on particular loci of power, such as the administrative leadership model. Viewpoints which emphasize the environment in which school administration works, such as the systems model, contrast with those which focus on the actual institutions involved, such as the harmony, pluralistic, and administrative leadership approaches.

The range of opinion present here makes it evident that no single approach is universally accepted, and that insights concerning the topic arise from a wide variety of sources. Future research will doubtlessly produce new models and new conclusions.

Perspectives on the Present

The preceding view of the history of board-superintendent relationships, and the range of models which characterize these ties, summarize much of current knowledge in this area. Yet, this information is of a comprehensive, rather than a concentrated nature. Many of the views noted stand in direct or partial opposition to each other.

Because the topic is so large, any effort to understand board-superintendent relationships must inevitably focus on a few, well defined subjects. Analysis of these topics can produce important perspectives on the workings of public school governance, as well as form the basis for more comprehensive research.

Uniqueness

One of the most pervasive aspects of board-administrative relationships is uniqueness. While any institutional interactions possess distinctive traits, the ties between educational legislative and executive branches of school governance are of a character not found in other branches of public affairs.

At the heart of their uniqueness is the legal basis of board-administrative relationships. Unlike state and federal legislatures and executives, which have separate constitutional bases and separate constituencies, educational governance usually has a single legal and electoral foundation. In many cases, the position of superintendents is not specified in the laws. Instead, it is the administrative convenience of each board. In almost all areas, the local superintendent is

appointed rather than elected. The board, rather than the community, is the direct constituency of the office.[91]

The uniqueness of board-administrtive relationships is also reflected in the history of the two institutions. Unlike other executives, the school superintendent arose at a fairly late hour in Americna history - during the nineteenth century. Even after it initially appeared, the office took an extended period to attain the status of school executive. Functioning as mere assistants to the boards, early superintendents, served networks of committees which themselves wielded executive power. During the twentieth century, as school administrations have fully developed, a unique character has persisted. Educational executive branches have never become the all-consuming red tape monsters which exist at state and federal levels. Board-superintendent relationships are still relationships between equals.[92]

In the present, the uniqueness of board-superintendent relationships continues. Amid a host of social traumas, such as the rise of powerful interest groups, the development of teacher unions, and changes in the attitudes of youth, these relatively tiny institutions preside over public education. In their diverse and numerous hands rest the survival and the perpetuation of the most basic elements of the American experiment.

The uniqueness of board-superintendent relationships has particularly far-reaching implications. As distinctive institutions, the instruments of school governance are fundamentally different from state and federal governments. This is because schools and other forms of administrations are structured to perform differing missions. The former are oriented toward the education of the population, the latter to exist to deal with a wide range of societal problems. While the former builds the nation of the future, the latter deals with the nation of the present.

Perhaps these phrases are not worth repeating. Experience suggests, however, that misconception of the roles and missions of boards and superintendents frequently accounts for many of the difficulties which those institutions face. The mission of training a new generation is difficult enough without adding to it the burdens of the previous one.

Procedural Aspects

Beyond the basic character of the board-administration ties, specific perspectives appropriately focus on the separation of those relationships. Like any area of human interaction, this area is filled with complexity and uncertainty. Yet from the wealth of historical and analytical data already presented, a few tentative conclusions seem in order.

The preceding discussion makes it clear that school governance must have some procedural basis. While discussion is a fundamental element of governance, documentary directions and guidelines are a must. Indeed, they serve to guide and increase the productivity of that discussion.

At the basis of the documented portion of board-administrative relationships are effective bylaws. In the increasingly crisis-plagued environment in which school governance takes place, workable regulations for the conduct of meetings and other activities are essential. Bylaws form the framework within which board and administration can carry out their duties and meet their responsibilities. One authority has concluded that trying to operate district governance without proper bylaws "is like trying to fly on one wing.."[93]

Another important reason for the development of effective bylaws is the public nature of the governance process. Because local school districts lie so physically, as well as legally close to community scrutiny, citizen and interest group involvement becomes inevitable. Even many nonpublic agencies today allow

for interested parties to participate in their decision-making processes. Bylaws and policies demonstrate that the school district recognizes and welcomes legitimate community interest.[94]

The history of school board-superintendent relationships, especially during the past three decades, reveals the need for procedural bylaws to structure internal, as well as public interaction. At the same time, this decade has also demonstrated the necessity of documenting the course and results of educational processes. The so-called accountability movement is not peculiar to schools; it transcends all aspects of government. Yet because public education is so close to local communities, demands on schools can become particularly strong.

In the context of the systems model, accountability is the impact of societal patterns on the governance process. In the harmony model, it is the attendance of the public at board meetings. In the pluralistic model, it often becomes special interests, attempting to maximize their influence. Whatever model is applied, however, it is clear that accountability represents a major factor in public school governance. Facing this movement is not an option, it is a necessity.[95]

Accountability reinforces the need for documentation in board-administration relationships. Beyond the bylaws and regulations which define the formulation and execution of policy, it focuses on evaluation of the governance process.

For the school board and administration, evaluation can take any number of forms. Approaches such as management by objectives, emphasize the entire range of governance, with attention to the process, as well as the outcomes. Other, summative evaluation procedures, focus only on outcomes. In some areas, accountability has been directed only at administrations, concentrating on the ability of superintendents and staffs at carrying out board policies. In others, board responsibility for outcomes is also recognized; and legislative, as well as executive performance is measured.[96]

It seems clear that any program of evaluation in public school governance must concentrate on the entire process. Both boards and administrations require scrutiny, not merely as isolated institutions, but in their continuing interaction. Performance of individual districts heavily depends on the ability of both institutions to set and attain educational goals. The development of documented evaluation of board-superintendent outcomes cannot be avoided.

The need for documentation is an important aspect of the process. Yet documentation, by itself, will never allow board-administration relationships to achieve their potential. The individual desiring an optimum approach to school governance will never find it on paper. As a pattern of relationships among humans, the essence of these relationships remains an elusive commodity.[97]

There are various aspects to that commodity. A number of them form the focus of individual models of educational governance. The desire for influence which permeates the pluralistic approach, the trust and respect of the harmony model; the sociological consciousness of the systems view; the peer-consciousness of the human relations model; and the centrality of the human relations model, all are aspects of human interaction which are reflected in board-administration processes.

The productive governance relationship is the product of a number of these factors. There is no one key, yet a few seem to be of particular importance.

Adaptation

There is little question that mutual adaptation is an important aspect of the process. From their documented positions as functionally different institutions, school boards and administrations must adapt and work together toward the pursuit of common educational goals. Because they are inherently different, a tension will

always exist in the relationship. Yet this tension need not be a negative influence. Unless the governance process degenerates into perpetual wrangling, it can sustain and enhance the quality of decision-making and implementation.[98]

Within the inherent tension of board-administration interaction, however, there must be adaptation. The human relations model highlights the role of adaptation within boards and within administrations, through the concepts of board and administrative cultures. Yet adaptation must occur between, as well as within these units.

Inevitably, adaptability involves give-and-take. Legislature and executive must achieve a working relationship which to some extent satisfies each, but to a total extent satisfies neither. This adaptation can never be documented in books or bylaws, although it takes place within their context. It cannot be taught in textbooks. It is sensed and learned through experience, like most human interaction.[99]

From the board's perspective, adaptation means developing policies with an eye toward their implementation. It may mean the use of realism in setting goals which can actually be implemented by the executive, rather than aspiring to goals which local resources will simply not accommodate. It may mean accepting the professional advice of the superintendent or other administrative staff member, with the recognition that full time educators can often provide effective insights into even the most local problems.

From the administration's perspective, adaptation can mean making meaningful inputs into policy without attempting to dominate the decision-making process. It can mean realizing that community wishes, as well as educational research, are important elements in the governance process.

Through these processes, there runs the notion that no single institution or person can do all things successfully, and that as a result, functions are divided

among organizations and individuals. The key to productivity and progress is the ability of these units to work together. That process cannot, of course, occur without adaptation and accommodation.

Anticipation

In addition to adaptation, the non-documented portion of board-superintendent relationships consists of anticipation. The systems model calls attention to the influence of the sociological environment on the governance of public education. The pluralistic approach focuses on the role of interest groups. Within the governance process, boards and superintendents must learn to anticipate events within these sectors.

The events of the past three decades, in many districts, have demonstrated what failure to anticipate events can do to school systems. Deluged under the onslaught of special interest groups, teacher unions, and angry students, many educational legislatures and executives have become wholly occupied formulating stopgap measures. As a result, little time has been left to pursue meaningful educational programming.[100]

Still more seriously, in other cases, failure to anticipate community change has resulted in the defeat of board members, the removal of superintendents, and the initiation of negative cycles of dispute and recrimination within school affairs. The systems model's view of electoral conflict and its effects graphically summarizes such patterns.[101]

Anticipation of community directions can and must be a part of board-administration relationships. Together, these two branches of school governance possess the wherewithall to define and deal with local events. The combination of their differing perspectives can produce a view of the future far better than each of their individual outlooks.

Yet anticipation need not merely characterize the relationship between school governance and its environment. It can also be applied to the development of ties between boards and administrations. Anticipation is something which grows out of an effective governance process. Through their interaction, the individuals who carry out legislative and executive functions may acquire the ability to gauge the actions of each other and use them to work more effectively toward common goals.

Anticipation by both parties can eliminate surprises in the governance process which can place the focus of controversy or sensationalism, rather than on the attainment of goals. From a general perspective, it can increase the familiarity and comfort with which boards and administrations work and thus contribute to the productivity of their efforts.

Reciprocal Assistance

Effective school governance also dictates that legislative and executive institutions aid each other in carrying out their respective functions. This should not imply that either party should interefere in the activities of the other. On the contrary, it means that, through judicious action, each can aid the other's performance within these areas.

From the board's perspective, aid to the administration can take a number of forms. It can be the development of policies which are capable of implementation. It should also become provision of resources necessary to implement those policies. Financial assistance is particularly necessary for any private or public organization to accomplish its mission. Boards should not assume that effective programming can be created with intelligence and good judgment alone. It requires financial resources. The board which attempts to shortchange its administration is not merely limiting its executive and students; it is cheating itself.[102]

From the administration's perspective, aid to the school board can also be varied. It is the obligation of the professional staff to provide the governing body with the best possible information. The quality of board decisions can be no better than the quality of the data on which those decisions are based. Because the administration is employed for its expertise, it must use its best insight to provide the most comprehensive range of data possible. There should be no surprises which arise because of administrative oversight in the collection and transmission of information.[103]

It is expected that both board and administration should be willing and competent to provide each other with various forms of assistance. In cases where the aid is not immediately forthcoming, however, neither party should be afraid to request it. Forthrightness in asking the other party to fulfill its responsibilities is a key element in effective school governance. Only if both branches of school government are relaxed and committed enough to work together, will meaningful progress toward educational objectives be possible.

Trust and Respect

Beyond the effective fulfillment of defined educational responsibilities, school board-administration relationships also must include a general trust and respect. These commodities transcend the performance of assigned rsponsibilities to shape the character of governance relationships on a continuing basis. It should be remembered that the position of trust and respect in board-administration relationships varies appreciably in models of public school governance. The harmony model places a major emphasis on these commodities, in the context of the documented responsibilities of the two institutions. The pluralistic model minimizes the importance of trust and respect, concentrating on influence and desire for power as the principal contributors to board and superintendent behavior.

The systems, human relations, and administrative leadership models do not directly address the basis of board-administration and superintendent ties. They instead focus on the dynamics of group action and the dimensions of executive leadership.

While educational authorities disagree on the significance of trust and respect in board-administration relationships, there can be little doubt that these commodities play a major role in any effective governance process. The national experience of the past decade should convince even the most inveterate cynic that some degree of trust and respect between community and government, as well as within public affairs, is necessary for productive activity. If this basic faith among humans is not present, relations between branches degenerate into a perpetual wrangling, with each side questioning the other's honesty. Under these circumstances, no progress toward educational goals occurs.[104]

Trust and respect between board and superintendent need not imply the sort of arid legalism implied by some interpretations of the harmony model. Accepting the pluralistic approach's contention that humans seek influence need not imply that respect cannot permeate their interaction. Realism and respect between legislative and executive branches of school governance must go hand in hand.[105]

In a general sense, commodities such as trust and respect both characterize and summarize those aspects of school board-administration relationships which cannot be documented in manuals or policy statements. Although these two branches of administration are enjoined to work together by the legal regulations which define them, cooperation, without trust and respect, becomes an empty and unproductive process.

Trust and respect include and enrich all of the elements of effective public school governance described in preceding paragraphs. The uniqueness of the ties between boards and superintendents can become uniquely effective when accompanied by reciprocal faith and commitment. Documented responsibilities and plans

of evaluation are transformed from semantic skeletons of living means of organizational development. Adaptation between branches of governance changes from mere accommodation to integration of strengths in the pursuit of common objectives. Anticipation is greatly facilitated, board and superintendent are challenged, not by each other, but by the future.[106]

An emphasis on trust and respect in public school governance seems almost paradoxical. These hallmarks of traditional approaches to the subject have long been neglected as theorists and researchers focused on political and sociological factors. Yet a reexamination of their significance is inevitable. The nation and its schools cannot function effectively without them.

The Path to Effectiveness

Any listing of essential features of university governance, such as that attempted here, naturally suggests a final question: how might these conditions be achieved? Neither worthwhile written procedures nor effective procedural relationships descend from the skies. In some cases, these situations arise through the combination of particular personal policies. Yet, if productivity in school governance must await such fortuitous circumstances, most districts will never attain it.

Optimum relationships between boards and superintendents are developed. They do not simply emerge. As such, they are the product of hard work and commitment.

In the case of bylaws and planning procedures, this effort and its products are more visible. Copies of policies and regulations, as well as work objectives and evaluation criteria, may be read by all. Their shaping of human activity is also seen in the consciousness which they create among individuals, and the results, or the lack of results, which they produce.[107]

Yet because they are not documented, not all of the products of hard work and effort in human relations do not exist within three dimensions. They cannot be referenced by chapter and verse, nor quantified and graphed. Yet their impact on American education is boundless.

Through commitment and energy, expounded in long sessions, often held in the late hours of the night or the early hours of the morning, boards and adminstrations progressively adapt to each other. Through working together, they develop expertise and acquire the capability of anticipating each other's actions. They become relaxed enough to request assistance from one another, and to expect that what they receive is the best available. Most importantly, the two parties acquire reciprocal trust and respect. Through a range of different situations and activities, they reach a dimension of commitment and cooperation which enables them to confront and surmount the major obstacles which lie before them.[108]

Hard work becomes an effective, although an uneasy road to success in public school governance. Yet even its success is not guaranteed. Long hours of effort will not necessarily create a relationship which will perform all things. Neither will established numbers of hours produce set levels of performance. Still, this remains the best, and perhaps the only road which currently exists.

Continuity: The Critical Linkage

A final comment concerning board-administration relationships concerns that elusive commodity which binds together all aspects of this development, continuity. Because branches of school government are composed of individuals, their composition is bound to change. The existence of terms for board members and conditions of employment for superintendents further insure that conditions will not remain the same. The schools and communities which are the environments for these relationships also undergo alteration. The introduction of new

educational technologies and demographic developments can alter the situations faced by school governance.

Amid these changes, however, the mission of American schools remains essentially the same. As such, continuity in relationships between boards and administrations is essential. Without it, governance becomes an episodic, disconnected process, in which each new group of individuals must reinvent the wheel and learn again, the conclusions reached by its predecessors.

Various factors can enhance continuity in the schools. Models such as the human relations approach point to the existence of board and administrative cultures which perpetuate attitudes and values. Influences such as adaptation, trust, and respect, discussed in preceding pages, can further aid in the development of continuity. The relative permanence of the superintendency amid the turnover of board members can also be a beneficial influence.

Beyond these factors, there remains the influence of that sense of local responsibility for the future which characterizes American education. Spelled out in laws and unwritten expectations, this force binds boards and administrations in their unselfish pursuit of excellence. It was this sense of responsibility which brought about the existence of these two institutions, over a century ago. It is the same influence which sustains and supports them through the present and toward the future.

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